



# We See

## What We See Changes Who We Are

WITNESS Project Youth Page is made possible by the Margaret Clemons Foundation and The Ministry of Education



WITNESS Team on it's way to Capoey. Front: Kwesi Archer. Second Row (left to right): Judith Cameron, Teriq Mohammed, Verney Henry. Third Row: Rosheni Takechandra, WITNESS Project Program Director. Back: Captain Lloyd.

## She Was Like a Sister to Me

By WITNESS Youth Staff

It was a Monday morning and I was as happy as a lark because it was my final exam day. I took my time before I left home, and went over my work so I could pass the exams. I had a schedule, but being all anxious and excited, I had forgotten to check it. As it turned out, that day I didn't have to attend school. When I almost reached, I realised I hadn't checked the schedule. When I arrived at school it was quiet. I didn't see anyone around in the compound; I thought it was strange. When I went inside it was empty. Then I realised it was a holiday. As I was about to leave the compound I heard someone scream. Something told me I should go and see who it was. When I went inside I saw a security guard's bicycle near the front door, so I went through the door. When I got there I saw one of my subject teachers unconscious on a bench. I quietly went into the class and helped her up. We got out of the class before the guard or whoever troubled her returned. There was a chair behind the school so I carried the teacher to it and after a while she regained consciousness. I asked her what happened and she claimed the person who troubled her drugged her and she

couldn't remember what happened after that. As she told me about her experience there was nothing but pain and tears in her eyes. She was attending training classes and it was her last day to finish her exams at the university. After what happened she didn't write the exams and she explained she wouldn't be promoted as a teacher. I felt really bad for her because she had worked for four years to be promoted and now everything was gone. I felt the pain in her that day because she couldn't trust anyone ever again. If I was in her position I would have felt like committing suicide because the rest of my life would be full of torture and embarrassment for something that was not my fault! I told her she needed to take a medical exam to know for sure if she was raped. I didn't get any contact number from her so I couldn't know whether she did the exam or not. She was like a sister to me and I told her it would remain as a secret between us. She soon left the school since her service came to an end and I never saw her again. Every time I think about her, I feel very scared because of the way I saw my teacher helpless.

## Discovering Capoey

By WITNESS Youth Staff

Whenever you ask someone a random question like; where would you like to travel to? It's almost predictable that they would scream out: America, Canada or one of these very famous countries. What a lot of people forget though, is that there is more to their homeland than they know. During my days with the WITNESS project, I was able to see and believe this, since I was lucky enough to have the chance to view the majestic Kaieteur Falls and the Capoey Village that's hidden all the way in Essequibo.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, my group and I journeyed to the biggest river in Guyana, the Essequibo River. We departed from Nations school complex where a school bus took us all the way to Parika. On our way to Parika, we managed to have a quick view of the Demerara River where we crossed the bridge. I had never been able to travel in a big bus over the river. As we moved towards the Parika Stelling I saw vast meadows of rice and cane.

As we were approaching the Parika Stelling anxiety filled the air, since everyone was psyched about travelling in the speed boats. After entering and settling into the speed boat, I can remember many of the group members grabbing onto each other as we took off, since the boats were super-fast, and the bow was in the air. Many times the boats shifted and twisted due to the waves and this resulted in screaming. I saw very strange formations of islands which were covered in very thick vegetation, I was hoping that maybe we could have seen a caiman, a four legged reptile from the alligator family, or a snake, somewhere in

the river, but alas, we did not.

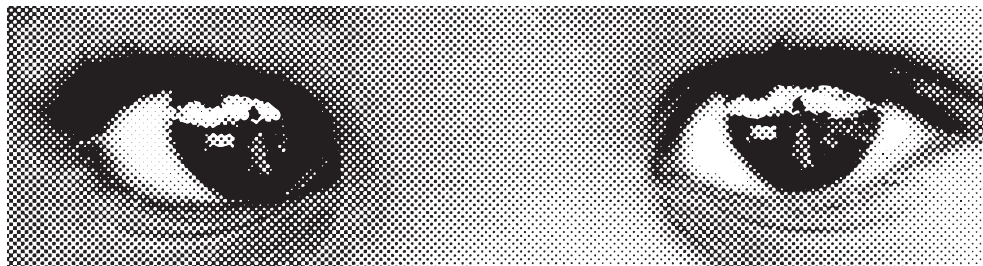
As we disembarked onto the shores of Essequibo, I noticed instantly the difference in the air. The air smelt fresh, the people seemed friendly, and gosh I wanted to reach Capoey quickly.

On our way in the bus, many of the kids were sharing their stories of what they were hoping to see in Capoey. I even heard they were making jokes about snakes and caimans which I so wanted to see. Within 45 minutes we arrived at the Capoey Lake where we needed to use another boat to travel to the Capoey Village. This was not fun since the boats were very slow, but the scenery was really good.

Upon arrival we were greeted, and then we started setting up at the hall. Everything seemed good and the Capoey children were all eager to participate. Introductions were made by the chief, and then we started the project. During the project workshop we arranged to work along with the Capoey kids. We managed to create abstract art with the children there.

After an interesting morning, we managed to have real fun in the Capoey Lake, which had red, almost black stained water. I managed however, to cut my foot, which almost spoiled the rest of the trip for me, but my friend helped me to get back into the groove of having fun and enjoying myself.

All in all, Capoey was an amazing day trip. The possibility of me visiting these places was zero to none. This was an experience of a lifetime, and a memory with my family, "The Witness Family," that will last forever.



## Thirteen Year Old Being Beaten

By WITNESS Youth Staff

I was only thirteen years old when I came home one afternoon from school and saw my nine year old neighbour being beaten by his grandmother. He was asked by his grandmother to take out the trash but was beaten because he didn't do it on time. I saw her take off the belt he was wearing and repeatedly hit him on his back and butt, with it. She used all her strength to inflict as much pain, as she quarrelled and cursed

at him, and when she was finished, she sent him to his room. This made me feel very sad and angry because when I see people, especially children, being abused, I feel very sorry for them. I think it is fair for him or any young person to do chores in the home, but I don't think it is fair for young people to be abused, verbally and physically, by older people. This causes me to dislike and lose respect for my elders.

Are you a witness or victim of violence? You are not alone. Make your anonymous call to Help & Shelter today and speak with a live counselor on 227-3454 or 225-4731.

## WITNESS Project Youth Reporters

- Kwesi Archer
- Haresh Bhagwan
- Judith Cameron
- Mark Davidson
- Reanna Douglas
- Daisha Henry
- Verney Henry
- Shakera Hoosain
- Danita Jaundoo
- Kevon Jones
- Linda-Deyi Lin
- Chantel Lewis
- Fiona Maughn
- Teriq Mohammad
- Krissy Morgan
- Kimberly Morgan
- Kaesia Munroe
- Nakasi Noel
- Marcel Persaud
- Rajendra Ramesh
- Devi Sankar
- Anthony Vishnu

"What we see changes who we are." – JR